

Annual Administrative Unit Assessment Guidelines

Overview

Administrative assessment is the process of planning and assessing goals and objectives for your administrative unit on an annual basis. The focus of administrative assessment is continuous improvement. At the beginning of the year, a unit sets objectives that will help it better achieve its goals and mission. At the end of the year, the unit determines whether the objectives were met and uses the results of the assessment to begin planning for the next year, making it a cyclical process.

The annual assessment report includes the unit's mission, goals, objectives, assessment methods, assessment results, and plans for improvement. Units are also asked to identify the criteria for determining whether the objective has been met and the person responsible for assessing each objective. Units are encouraged to develop the goals, objectives, and measures at the beginning of the academic year and then report the assessment results and improvement plans at the end of the academic year.

Purpose

Administrative Assessment helps units engage effectively in continuous improvement. The regular process of planning and assessing objectives enables a unit to better perform its critical functions and more effectively support institutional growth. Additionally, SACSCOC requires that an institution's administrative units regularly engage in goal-setting and assessment activities that improve their administrative effectiveness.

Relationship to Other Planning and Reporting Activities

Some units engage in other forms of planning or reporting, such as the development of an internal strategic plan, budgetary planning, or reporting on key performance indicators. In some cases, the goals, objectives, or measures that have already been developed for other planning or reporting purposes can also be used for annual administrative assessment. If the goals, objectives, or measures developed for other planning and reporting needs are relevant to the current year, and if they fit the administrative assessment framework, units should feel free to also use them as part of their annual administrative assessment.

Timeline:

Summer and Early Fall

We recommend you start planning your goals and objectives for the coming year in late summer or early fall. Planned goals, objectives, and assessment methods should be finalized and entered into Nuventive before the end of Fall term.

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Late Spring and Early Summer:

We recommend that you conduct the assessment of your objectives and make improvement plans for the next year around May or June. At this time, you'll note whether your achievement target was met, analyze the results, and decide how to improve on the objective for the next year. All assessment information should be entered into Nuventive by June 30th.

Explanation of Components:

Mission: A brief description of the purpose of the unit, what it does, its stakeholders, and how it contributes to the mission or strategic direction of the university.

Planning Stage

Goals: Broad, general statements about what the administrative unit wants to achieve as it works toward its mission. Goals are long-term and do not tend to change from year to year. Units usually have 3-5 goals.

Objectives: Specific statements about the what the administrative unit wants to achieve as it works toward its goals. Objective statements should use observable action verbs. They may or may not change from year to year. (Some objectives become obsolete after a year; others may take multiple years to achieve.)

Assessment Method: The assessment method answers the questions: How will you know whether you've achieved or made progress toward your objective? What type of data or product will you collect? Every objective should have at least one assessment method.

Achievement Target: A specific target that will indicate whether you were successful in meeting your objective this year. Achievement targets are usually quantitative – a number, percentage, or proportion – or they may provide details on the completion of activities or products by certain dates.

Individual Responsible for Assessment: The person responsible for carrying out the assessment of the objective and reporting back on progress at the end of the year.

Results Stage

Conclusion: An indication of whether the objective was met, partially met, or not met. It is perfectly acceptable for an objective to be “partially met” or “not met” as units often encounter unexpected complications during the year. If an achievement target is partially met or not met, simply explain what happened in the Results Discussion and Analysis section.

Results Discussion and Analysis: A thorough discussion of the efforts to achieve the objective and whether they had the desired results. The discussion and analysis of the results will inform your plans for future improvements.

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Past improvements (Optional): Describe any improvements made since last year or during the current year to better achieve the objective. If the objective is new and no improvements were made during the year, you can leave this blank.

Future improvements: Discuss whether you plan to continue with the objective and assessment method next year and why or why not. Incorporate what you learned from the Results Discussion and Analysis and provide details on steps that will be taken next year.